

Iraq Weekly Status Report

March 19, 2008

**Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
US Department of State**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS	3
POLITICAL	
• Governance & Legislation	4
• Provincial	7
SECURITY	
• Situation Update	10
• Security Transition	11
ECONOMIC	
• Economic & Government Capacity Update	14
• Oil and Essential Services	17
• Economic Indicators	23
DIPLOMATIC	
• Political Engagement	25
• Economic Engagement	27
• Coalition	28
Notes, Source Citations and Contact Information	29



HIGHLIGHTS

- Iraqi VP Mehdi withdraws his veto of the Provincial Powers Law. (**POLITICAL, page 4**)
- Vice President Cheney visits Iraq. (**POLITICAL, page 4**)
- Iraqi PM Nuri al-Maliki opens a two-day unity conference March 18. (**POLITICAL, page 5**)
- A suicide bomb in Karbala March 17 kills 50 and wounds 74. (**SECURITY, page 10**)
- The 2008 Federal Budget Law published in the Iraqi Official Gazette. (**ECONOMIC, page 14**)
- Operations halted at the Baiji refinery due to a power outage March 16. (**ECONOMIC, page 17**)
- U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney appeals to Iraq's Arab neighbors to increase their diplomatic presence in Iraq. (**DIPLOMATIC, page 25**)



POLITICAL - Governance & Legislation

VP Mehdi Withdraws Veto of Provincial Powers:

- Iraqi VP Adel Abd al-Mehdi withdrew his veto of the Provincial Powers Law March 19. The law establishes a power-sharing arrangement between the central and provincial governorates and mandates provincial elections be held by October 1. Also per the new law, the Iraqi Parliament must pass a new elections law within 90 days to facilitate provincial and national elections. The veto power of the Presidency Council permits an iterative process to take place between the Presidency Council and the Parliament to address specifics within a law. The bill must now be published in the Official Gazette to become law.

Vice President Dick Cheney on Surprise Visit to Iraq:

- During a 10-day Mideast trip, Vice President Dick Cheney made a surprise visit to Iraq March 17 to mark the fifth anniversary of U.S.-led Operation Iraqi Freedom. "It's especially significant to be able to return this week as we mark the fifth anniversary of the beginning of the campaign that liberated the people of Iraq from Saddam Hussein's tyranny and launched them on the difficult but historic road to democracy," Cheney said after meeting with PM Nuri al-Maliki. Cheney hailed both the drop in violence in Iraq since the U.S. military troop surge was implemented, as well as recently passed Iraqi legislation aimed at keeping the country on a democratic path. The Vice President also warned against drawing down forces at this time.



POLITICAL - Governance & Legislation

UN: Iraq World's Top Source of Asylum Seekers:

- According to the Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries in 2007 report issued by the UNHCR on March 18, in 2007 the number of new applications for refugees in 43 industrialized countries rose 10% to 338,000 from 306,300 in 2006. Iraqis topped the list of asylum seekers for the second year in a row, with 45,200 applications last year. "It is important to bear in mind, however, that Iraqi asylum seekers in industrialized countries represent only one percent of the estimated 4.5 million Iraqis uprooted by the conflict," the report said. Two million Iraqis have fled to neighboring Jordan and Syria, where social and health services are struggling with the influx, while another 2.5 million people are internally displaced. The UNHCR has sought \$261 million this year to assist Iraqi refugees and IDPs.

Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki Calls for National Unity:

- Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki opened a two-day unity conference March 18, which was boycotted by the country's main Sunni bloc as well as the al-Iraqiya List. Additional reports also add the Sadrists to the list of those who did not attend. "Let us talk of forgiving each other rather than threatening each other," said Maliki. "I call upon the political blocs to support national reconciliation because that is the only solution to help Iraqis." Maliki urged the Sunnis not to boycott the initiatives, but the Sunni bloc -- the National Accord Front -- said it was not invited to attend. Additionally, the Sunni bloc announced it was protesting the release of former Deputy Health Minister Hakim al-Zamili, who was freed after an Iraqi court said there was no evidence to support allegations of his involvement with Shiite death squads. The Sunni bloc also claims that Maliki failed to release detainees not charged with specific crimes, has not disbanded Shiite militias and has not sufficiently included Sunni lawmakers in decision-making on security issues. On the former claim, the Amnesty Law was implemented March 2 and regional courts have begun accepting applications for amnesty releases.

POLITICAL - Governance & Legislation



GOI States Intention to Execute "Chemical Ali":

- The GOI reiterated its intention to execute Ali Hassan al-Majid, also known as "Chemical Ali," together with two other former aides of Saddam Hussein. However, the Presidency Council has not signed the order yet, and without their signature, the order cannot be implemented. Chemical Ali was sentenced to death last June for genocide, along with former Defense Minister Sultan Hashim al-Tai and former Armed Forces deputy Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti. The three were convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity for overseeing a military campaign against Kurdish villagers in 1988 that left 180,000 people dead. "The Iraqi cabinet calls for the three Saddam aides to be executed together at one time in order to implement the sentence issued by the court against them," a cabinet statement said. Under Iraqi law, the three men should have been executed by October 4 last year. The three men are in the custody of the U.S. military, which has refused to hand them over to the Iraqi authorities until legal conflicts are resolved.



POLITICAL – Government of Iraq

Coalition Affiliation (at time of appointment)
United Iraq Alliance
Kurdistani Alliance
Iraqi Accord Front
Iraqi National List
Other / Independent

(F) = Female

*Formerly Tawafuq

**Formerly Sadrist/UIA

***Formerly Iraqiya

Prime Minister

Nuri al-Maliki

Deputy Prime Minister

* Vacant

Deputy Prime Minister

Barham Salih

President

Jalal Talabani

Deputy President

Tariq al-Hashimi

Deputy President

'Adil 'Abd al-Mahdi

Minister of Agriculture

Ali al-Bahadeli

Minister of Communications

*** Vacant

Minister of Culture

* Vacant

Minister of Defense

Abdul Qadir Muhammed
Jasim al-MufrajiMinister of Displacement
& MigrationAbd al-Samad Rahman
Sultan

Minister of Electricity

Karim Wahid

Minister of Education

Khudayyir al-Khuza'i

Minister of Environment

Narmin 'Uthman (F)

Minister of Finance

Bayan Jabr

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hoshyar Zebari

Minister of Health

Saleh al-Hasnawi

Minister of Higher Education

* Vacant

Minister of Human Rights

Wijdan Mikha'il (F)

Minister of Industry
& Minerals

Fawzi al-Hariri

Minister of Interior

Jawad al-Bulani

Minister of Justice

*** (Safa al Safi
acting)Minister of Housing &
Construction

Bayan Daza'l (F)

Minister of Labor &
Social AffairsMahmud Muhammad
Jawad al-Radi

Minister of Oil

Husayn al-Shahristani

Minister of Planning

Ali Baban

Minister of Trade

Abd al-Falah al-Sudani

Minister of Science &
Technology

Ra'id Fahmi Jahid

Minister of Municipalities
& Public Works

Riyad Ghurayyib

Minister of Transportation

** Vacant

Minister of Water Resources

'Abd al-Latif Rashid

Minister of Youth &
Sports

Jasim Muhammad Ja'far

Minister of State for
Civil Society* (Wijdan Mikha'il
Acting) (F)Minister of State for
National Dialogue Affairs

Akram al-Hakim

Minister of State for National
Security Affairs

Shirwan al-Waili

Minister of State for
Foreign Affairs

* Vacant

Minister of State for
Governorates Affairs

Sa'd Hashim

Minister of State for
Tourism and Antiquities

** Vacant

Minister of State for
Women's Affairs

** (Narmeen Othman Acting)

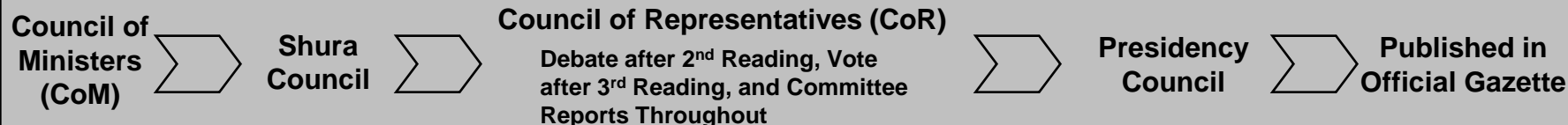
Minister of State for CoR
Affairs

Safa al-Safi



POLITICAL – Key Legislation and Refugee Update

Legislative Process



Elections	The Council of Ministers is currently reviewing the law, which will set the legal basis and structure of provincial and national elections.
Hydrocarbons Package	The level of control allocated to the central government in the July 2007 draft version of the Framework Law (currently in CoR Committee) is the key point of disagreement; there may be more progress on the Revenue Management Law, currently with the Shura Council, in the coming months.
Amnesty Law	PASSED: CoR approved the law on February 13; the law was signed by the Presidency Council February 26 and was implemented March 2.
Pensions Amendment	PASSED: Published in the Official Gazette December 2007.
De-Ba'athification Reform	PASSED: Approved by default by the Presidency Council February 2008. Published in the Official Gazette in mid-February.
Provincial Powers	PASSED: CoR approved the law on February 13; the law was vetoed by the Presidency Council February 26. The veto was rescinded on March 19.

Refugee Update

Refugees in the region: 2-2.4 million

Internally displaced persons in Iraq: 2.2-2.4 million

Total number of Iraqi refugees admitted to the U.S. during to date in FY07-FY08: 3,635

POLITICAL - Provincial



PRT Lessons Learned Workshop:

- There was an interagency PRT Lessons Learned workshop March 11-12 in Gettysburg, PA studying stabilization and reconstruction to review the progress of the expanded Provincial Reconstruction Team initiative in Iraq. The goal of the event was to draw upon important lessons about PRT initiatives in Iraq and Afghanistan and to identify a whole government approach for future stability operations. Despite important differences between the Iraq and Afghan PRT programs, participants identified important lessons learned common to both. Key principles include: avoiding the cookie-cutter approach to PRTs, setting forth clear, consistent and measurable metrics to assess effectiveness, establishing clear lines of authority, ensuring interagency integration and transitioning PRTs to civilian control as soon as security conditions permit.



SECURITY - Situation Update

Suicide Bomb in Karbala:

- A suicide bomber in Karbala detonated a vest of explosives March 17, killing 50 and injuring 74 others. The explosion happened on a busy street outside the Shiite Imam Hussein shrine shortly before evening prayers.

Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) Fights Police:

- Elements of JAM clashed with local police March 16 in Diyala Province, resulting in the deaths of five militants and two policemen. This follows a clash in Wasit Province March 11 in which at least 14 were killed. Senior aides issued further clarification March 13 and 14 regarding Sadr's March 9 statements concerning the status of the JAM "freeze." The additional information may help diminish confusion within JAM, which may have led to the March 11 incident.



SECURITY – Security Transition

Iraqi Police Station Opens in Shat al Taji:

- A new Iraqi police station opened March 15 in Shat al Taji, northwest of Baghdad. The theme of the ceremony, echoed by both the Iraqi police commander and Coalition forces, was breaking through sectarian violence and uniting Shiites and Sunnis. The police station houses about 530 police officers, who have undergone rigorous training.

Iraqi Army's 21st Infantry Brigade Graduates Unit Set Fielding:

- Iraq's 21st Infantry Brigade of the 5th Division graduated Unit Set Fielding from Besmaya Range Complex March 18. Unit Set Fielding takes an entire brigade and equips soldiers with the training and equipment necessary to fight. Iraqis lead the training, which consists of M-16 familiarization, close quarters combat, machine gun training, and vehicle maintenance and operation. Much of the equipment was acquired through Foreign Military Sales. Unit Set Fielding began in October 2007 to form new brigades.

Iraqi Intelligence Center Opens in Baghdad:

- A groundbreaking ceremony took place February 28 to begin work on an Iraqi intelligence center. The project will have two phases; the first is scheduled for completion in September 2008 and will include eight buildings housing Baghdad area Intelligence Directorates. The second phase will include a headquarters building for the Joint HQ M2 intelligence organization, sleeping quarters, a dining facility, and other life support structures.

SECURITY – Security Transition



Iraqi Flight Training Advances:

- The once-decimated Iraqi Air Force is rebuilding quickly, thanks to a flight school run jointly by Iraqi Air Force instructors and Coalition forces. The Iraqi Flight Training School is located in Kirkuk and trains officers to fly fixed and rotary wing aircraft. The school opened in October 2007 and has since doubled the size of its fleet as well as increased its weekly sorties tenfold. The number of Iraqi airmen also grew from 700 just 14 months ago to around 1,350, with another 450 operators currently undergoing training. Iraqi instructors currently fly 25 percent of all training sorties and conduct all of the flight scheduling. By December 2008, Iraqi trainers are expected to control over 90 percent of the entire training program. The Iraqi Air Force uses aircraft purchased via Foreign Military Sales, which allows the GOI to purchase military equipment from foreign countries with Iraqi funds.



SECURITY - Iraqi Security Forces

Iraq Security Forces as of January 31, 2008 ^a			
Component	Current Authorized Personnel ^b	Assigned Personnel ^c	Total Trained Personnel to date ^d
Ministry of Interior (MoI) Forces ^e			
Iraqi Police Service ^f	288,001	279,870	166,037
National Police ^g	33,670	33,531	44,156
Border Enforcement	38,205	40,852	28,023
Total MoI	359,876	354,253	238,216
Ministry of Defense (MoD) Forces ^h			
Army	186,352	160,248	180,263
Support Forces	17,369	18,087	19,750
Air Force	2,907	1,344	1,370
Navy	1,483	1,123	1,194
Total MoD	208,111	180,802	202,577
Counter Terrorism Bureau			
Special Operations	4,857	3,144	3,709
Total Iraqi Security Forces	572,844	538,199	444,502

a Numbers do not include ministry staffs.

b Numbers reflect Government of Iraq (GOI) authorizations.

c Numbers are based upon GOI payroll data and do not reflect present for duty totals.

d Numbers reflect assigned personnel that have received training.

e Numbers reflect total ISF personnel trained to date, some of which are no longer assigned due to casualties, AWOL, and normal separation.

f MoI strength does not reflect investigative and administrative forces, the MoI HQ, MoI Forensics, Dignitary Protection, or contracted guards.

g MoI Police Support Unit, Provincial Security Force, and Emergency Response Unit personnel are part of the Iraqi Police Service and does not include other Ministry FPS.

h The MoD strength are derived from Modified Tables of Organization and Equipment (MTOEs).



ECONOMIC – Economic & Government Capacity Update

2008 Federal Budget Law Published:

- The 2008 Federal Budget Law was published on March 13 in the Iraqi Official Gazette as Law No. 20 for the year 2008. Publication is the final legislative step in enacting the Iraqi budget.

Iraq IT Sector Booming:

- Forecasts for the expansion of Iraq's IT sector in 2008 have international companies looking for ways to do business in the country. IT operations could reach up to \$1 billion by the end of this year. Netgear, a large networking provider, has announced plans to invest in the Iraq IT sector. Netgear is pursuing a local distributor, Al-Nab'a Network Solutions, to execute its portfolio. Omar Lutfi Hussain, corporate account manager at Netgear Middle East, stated, "We have outlined an extensive plan to provide sufficient support for Al-Naba'a with the aim of better equipping them in the important role that they will be playing in our foray into the Iraq market."
- Vendors, previously hesitant because of security concerns, are now assessing ways to get involved given the improvements in security. Western Digital, a hard drive vendor, held meetings recently to discuss potential business opportunities with Iraq. Western Digital and Netgear's approaches may soon be copied by other vendors. Due to the unpredictable market, these companies have approached smaller local companies that can act as distributors and resellers. Khwaja Saifuddin, senior sales manager at Western Digital Middle East, said "We have dedicated companies (in Dubai)...that are opening offices in Iraq because the contracts... have been extended. Metra, for example, is setting up in Iraq so we will have the distribution and channel in place."



ECONOMIC – Economic & Government Capacity Update

Basra Investment Conference:

- The Basra Development Commission (BDC) hosted a three day investment conference in Kuwait March 12-14. The conference brought together international and Gulf region investors and Basrawi leaders to discuss opportunities and the legal framework for investment. There were specific briefings on port development, agriculture, construction, hydrocarbons, and airport development. The Basra Development Commission is a collaborative effort between the UK and Basra's provincial government. The BDC is establishing working groups for monitoring and evaluating economic growth; it currently works with the Basra Investment and Promotion Agency (BIPA) on these efforts. Eventually, the BIPA will take over the BDC's responsibilities and work with potential investors in the region and the leadership of the province.

Syria and Iraq Discuss Industrial Relations:

- Iraqi Minister of Industry and Minerals Fawzi Hariri met recently with Syrian Minister of Industry Dr. Fuad Issa al-Jony. The two discussed topics related to increasing trade and industrial relations between the two countries. These topics included activation of agreements between Iraq and Syria on textiles, drugs, and food production. Minister al-Jony expressed Syria's desire to strengthen economic ties with Iraq. Minister Hariri stated that Iraq anticipates partnership with Syria both in the public and private sectors.

ECONOMIC – Economic & Government Capacity Update



Major Agriculture Initiative:

- The Ministry of Agriculture hosted a major agriculture conference March 10 where Prime Minister Maliki launched an initiative to achieve agricultural self-sufficiency within 10 years. Iraq's 2008 budget funds the \$500 million initiative. Over 250 Iraqi officials, private sector participants, and 28 U.S. government officials attended the event in Baghdad, the first major agricultural conference since 2003. Minister of Agriculture Dr. Ali Al-Bahadeli stressed the importance of including the private sector and revitalizing the extension system.



ECONOMIC – Oil and Essential Services

Crude Oil Update:

Price averages in world markets closed with the following prices:

Basrah Light at \$103.938/ barrel

Dated Brent at \$106.566/barrel

WTI Cushing at \$109.442/ barrel

Oman/Dubai at \$98.052/barrel

Revenue estimates:

2006: \$31.3 Billion

2007: \$41.0 Billion

2008: **\$13.1 Billion (ytd)**

Baiji Refinery Suffers Power Outage:

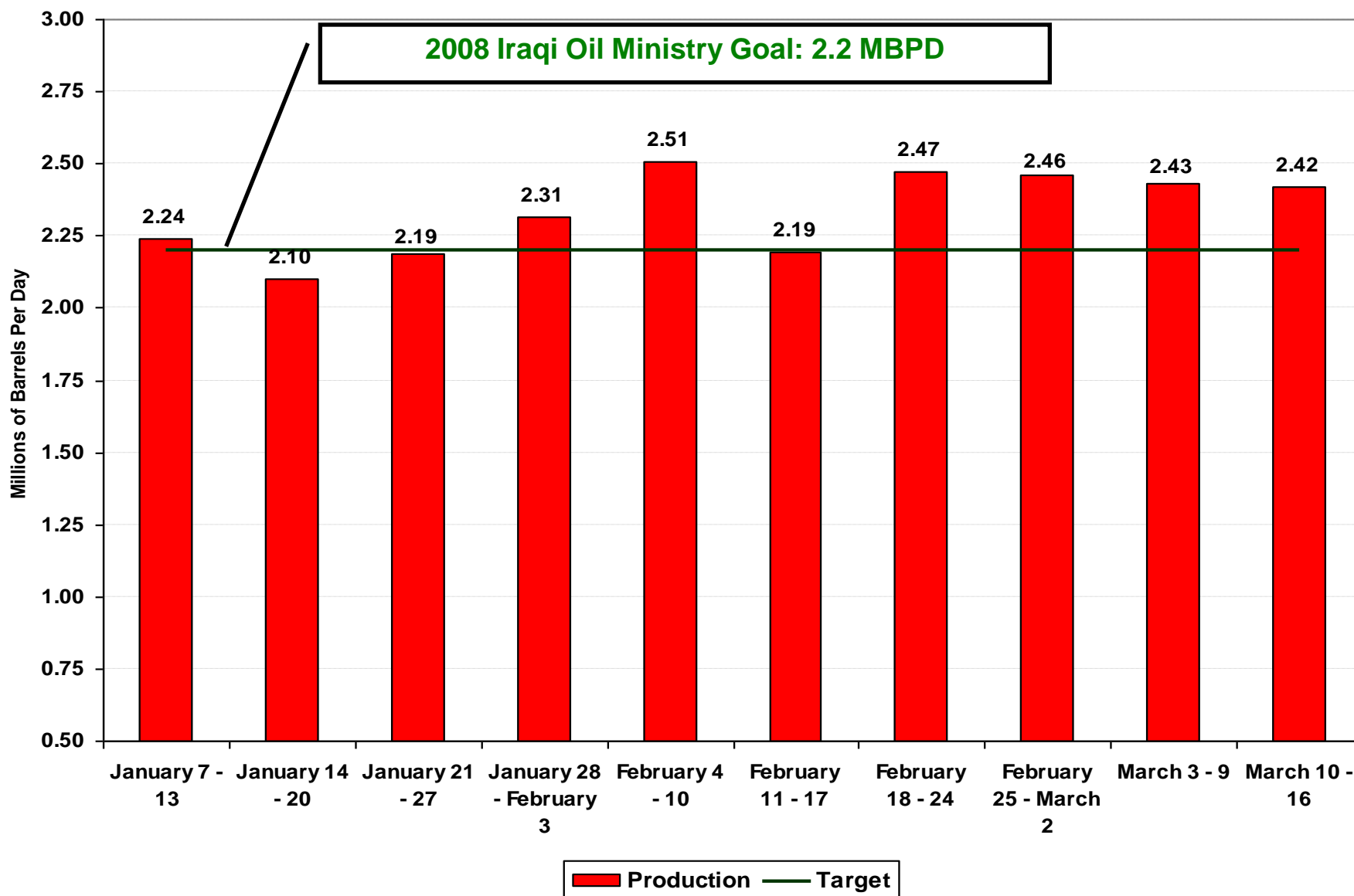
- Operations were halted at the Baiji refinery due to a power outage March 16. Officials at the plant stated that it was not clear when work would restart. The plant's shutdown did not affect exports. The 275,000 barrels that are refined there daily are primarily used for the domestic market. This is the second time in 2008 that the refinery has had to stop production. Lack of power caused a two-day halt in January.

Kirkuk Oil Exports:

- Iraq's northern export pipeline to Turkey, which pumps approximately 450,000 barrels per day, has been on hold for two days. An unnamed shipping agent stated that the flow is expected to restart shortly but at an unspecified time. The agent stated, "Crude oil pumping from Kirkuk oil fields [to the] (Turkish port of) Ceyhan has been suspended since Sunday because of a minor problem. We have been told that they would resume very soon." In the past, the northern pipeline has been the target of both sabotage and technical difficulties. The cause of this latest problem is unknown.

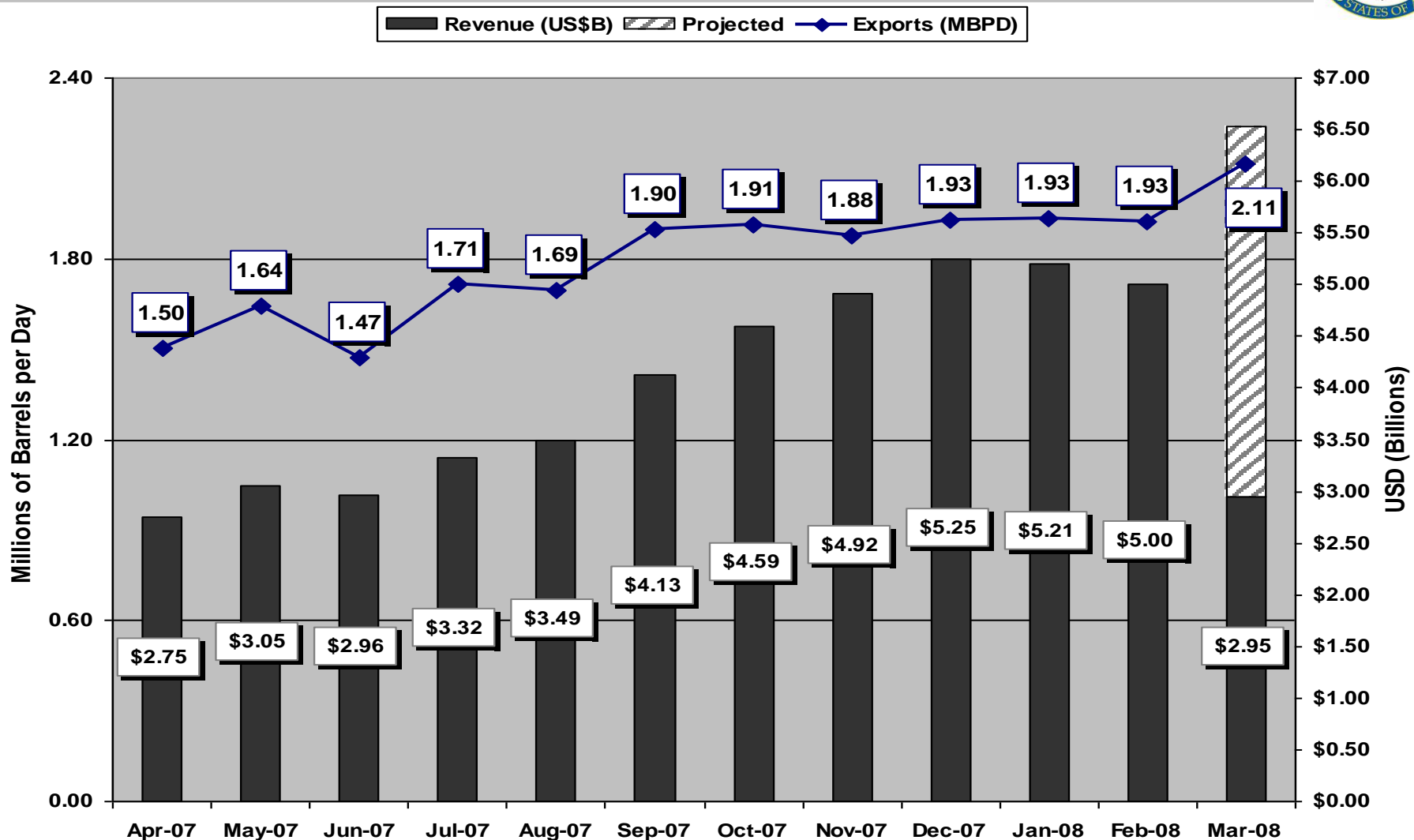


ECONOMIC – Crude Oil Production





ECONOMIC – Crude Oil Export

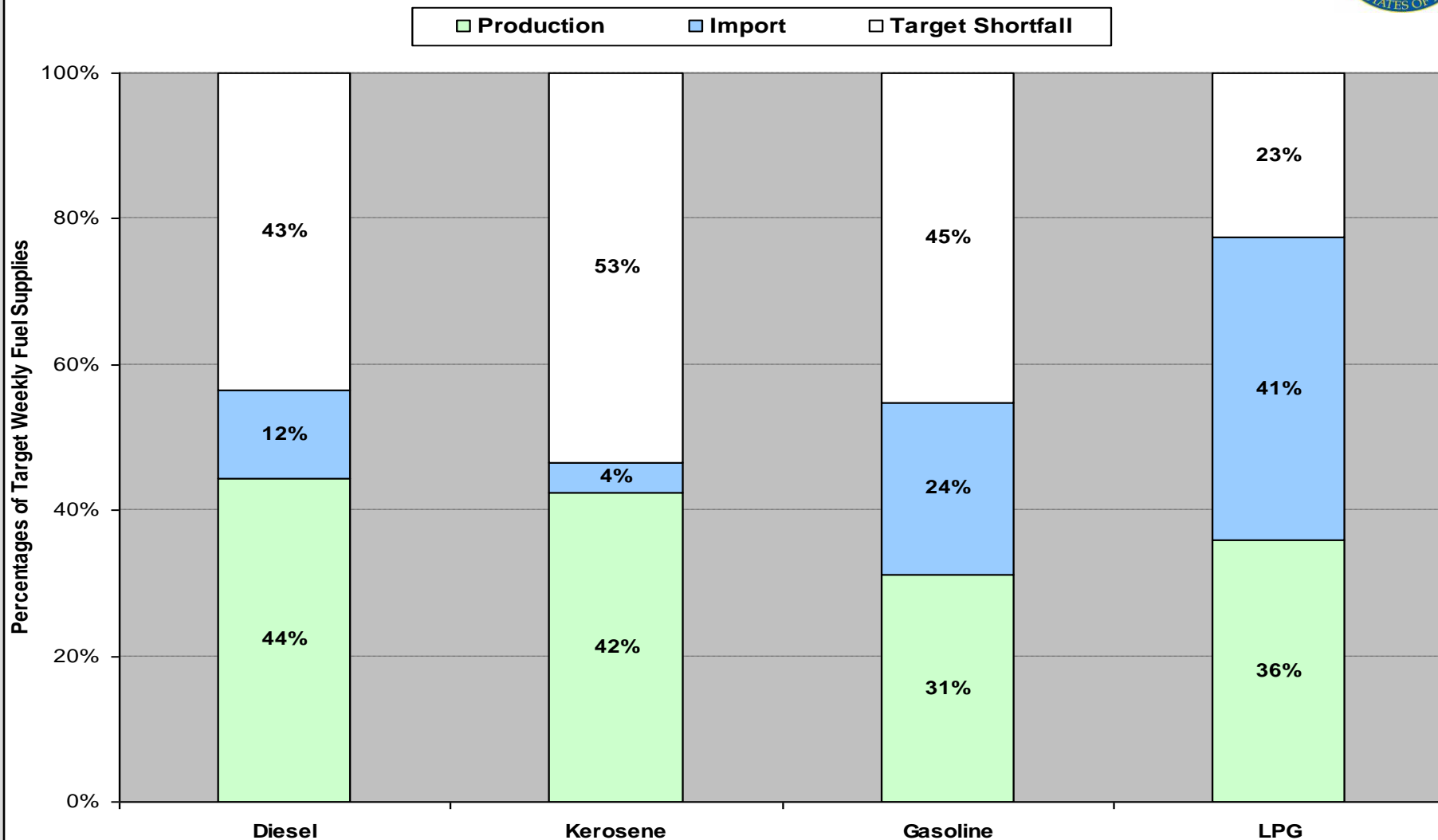


- 2006 Revenue Estimate: \$31.3 Billion
- 2007 Revenue Estimate: \$41.0 Billion

2008 Revenue Estimate: \$13.1 Billion (ytd)



ECONOMIC – Total Critical Refined Product Supplies



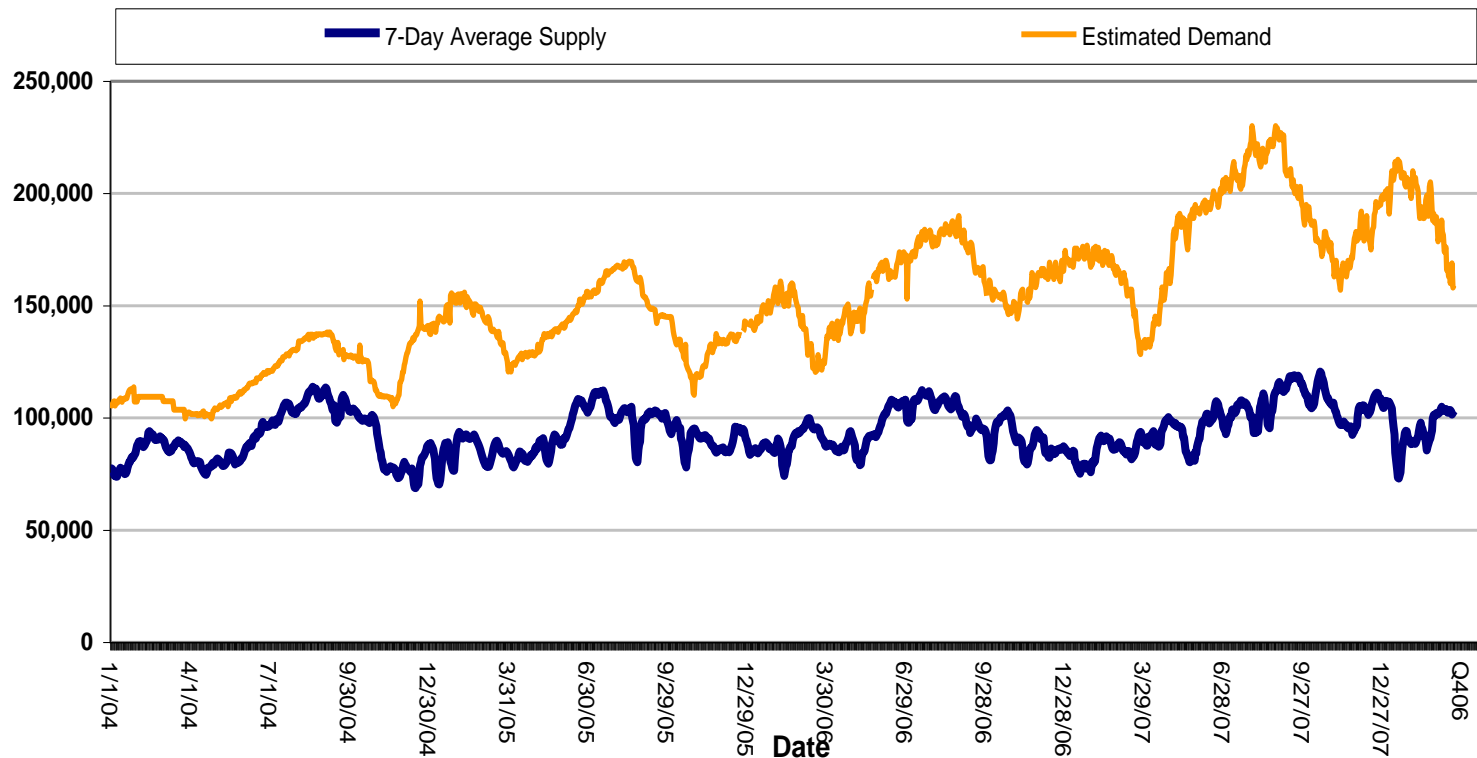
Note: This is a daily average for March 10 - 16

- Diesel: 13.8 ML supply of 24.5 ML target
- Kerosene: 6.8 ML supply of 14.6 ML target
- Gasoline: 14.7 ML supply of 26.8 ML target
- LPG: 3,950 tons supply of 5,100 tons target



ECONOMIC – Electricity

Daily Electricity Supplied and Estimated Demand in Iraq Since January 2004

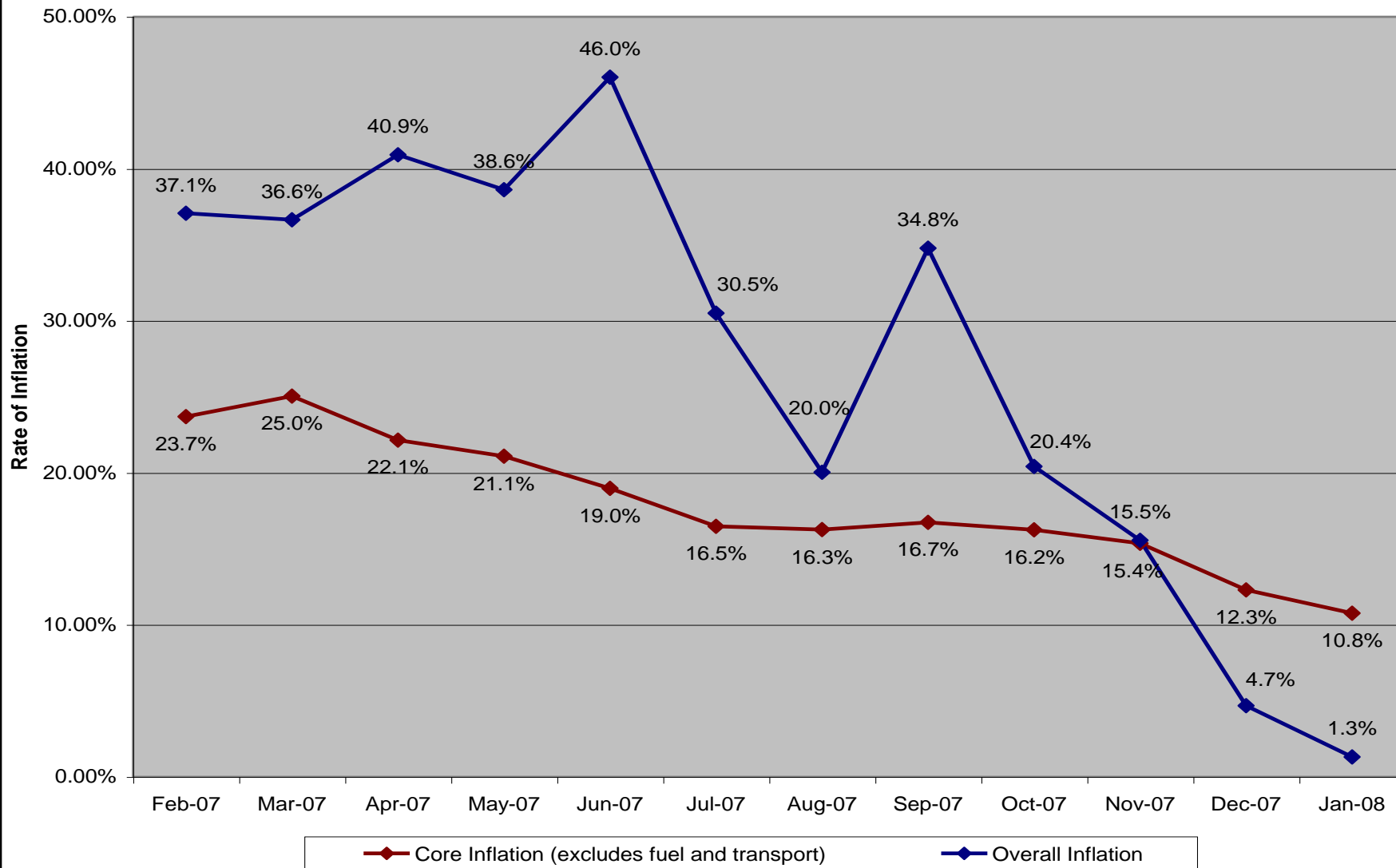


- For March 12-18, daily electricity demand was 8% above the same period last year. Daily supply from the grid was 22% above the year-earlier period and met 63% of demand, compared with 55% for the year-earlier period.
- Hours of power after meeting demand from essential services are not available for this week.

ECONOMIC – Economic Indicators



Year-on-Year Inflation





ECONOMIC – Economic Indicators

Economic Indicator	This Week	Last Week	Last Month	Last Year
Iraqi Commercial Bond Sales				
Price (USD)	73.97	\$74.15	\$66.76	\$62.82
Yield	8.54%	8.52%	9.56%	10.16%
Central Bank's USD Currency Auction				
USD Sold	\$91,730,000	\$80,713,000	\$75,237,000	\$66,957,492
NID Exchange Rate	\$1,209	\$1,210	\$1,210	\$1,254.00
Total Employed by USG Programs				
	96,934	94,494	82,608	N/A



ECONOMIC - Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) 1 and 2

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Sector\Status			Committed			Obligated			Disbursed		
(Millions of USD)	Allocated	Un-allocated	Last Week	Current	Change	Last Week	Current	Change	Last Week	Current	Change
Security and Law	\$4,978	\$27	\$4,956	\$4,955	-\$1	\$4,956	\$4,955	-\$1	\$4,866	\$4,866	\$0
Justice and Civil Society	\$2,264	\$38	\$2,243	\$2,240	-\$3	\$2,239	\$2,237	-\$3	\$2,152	\$2,153	\$0
Electricity Sector	\$4,196	\$29	\$4,067	\$4,066	-\$1	\$4,050	\$4,048	-\$2	\$3,772	\$3,781	\$9
Oil Infrastructure	\$1,723	\$2	\$1,597	\$1,597	\$0	\$1,597	\$1,597	\$0	\$1,568	\$1,569	\$1
Water and Sanitation	\$2,067	\$35	\$1,958	\$1,957	-\$1	\$1,945	\$1,944	-\$1	\$1,781	\$1,782	\$1
Transportation and Comm\	\$462	\$1	\$457	\$456	-\$1	\$450	\$449	-\$1	\$409	\$407	-\$2
Roads, Bridges and Const\	\$327	\$6	\$318	\$318	\$0	\$317	\$317	\$0	\$247	\$247	\$0
Health Care	\$812	\$10	\$778	\$782	\$4	\$772	\$776	\$4	\$723	\$725	\$2
Private Sector Development	\$821	\$2	\$821	\$821	\$0	\$821	\$821	\$0	\$811	\$811	\$0
Edu\, Refugees, Human Rights	\$436	\$0	\$423	\$423	\$0	\$423	\$423	\$0	\$395	\$395	\$0
Admin Expense (USAID,DoS)	\$213	\$0	\$210	\$210	\$0	\$210	\$210	\$0	\$210	\$210	\$0
Total IRRF II	\$18,299	\$150	\$17,827	\$17,824	-\$4	\$17,780	\$17,776	-\$4	\$16,933	\$16,946	\$13
IRRF II Non-Construction	-	-	\$7,924	\$7,924	\$0	\$7,905	\$7,905	\$0	\$7,689	\$7,690	\$1
IRRF II Construction	-	-	\$9,383	\$9,380	-\$4	\$9,355	\$9,351	-\$4	\$8,728	\$8,739	\$11
IRRF II Overhead	-	-	\$520	\$520	\$0	\$520	\$520	\$0	\$516	\$517	\$1
Total IRRF I	\$2,475	\$0	\$2,291	\$2,291	\$0	\$2,232	\$2,232	\$0	\$2,139	\$2,139	\$0
Grand Total IRRF I & II	\$20,774	\$150	\$20,118	\$20,115	-\$4	\$20,012	\$20,008	-\$4	\$19,072	\$19,085	\$13



DIPLOMATIC – Political Engagement

Cheney Urges Arab States to Increase Diplomatic Ties to Iraq:

- During an unannounced visit to Baghdad, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney appealed to Iraq's Arab neighbors such as Saudi Arabia to increase their diplomatic presence in Iraq as a means to stemming the tide of Iranian influence in the country. "Our Arab friends would do well to send ambassadors to Iraq," said Cheney, reminding Arab states that if they are "concerned about Iranian influence in Iraq, one of the ways for them to counter that is to make a commitment to have a presence here as well." A lack of ambassador-level diplomatic missions in Iraq by major Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt has frustrated U.S. diplomats who see regional Arab engagement as crucial to success and to mitigating the influence of Iran.

European Parliament Addresses EU Aid to Iraq:

- The European Parliament recommended to the Council of Europe March 13 that EU assistance to Iraq focus on capacity building, including budget execution and public finance reform, the rule of law, elections, and respect for human rights in conjunction with the International Compact with Iraq. The recommendation stated that the EU boost the size and resources of its office in Baghdad and singled out the Southern Marshlands and the Kurdish Region as targets for assistance.



DIPLOMATIC – Political Engagement

Japan to Host Seminar on National Reconciliation of Iraq:

- The Government of Japan will hold its second seminar on National Reconciliation of Iraq March 20-28, inviting a delegation of 13 influential Iraqis that includes members of parliament, heads of both Sunni and Shiite parties, and others. The seminar is aimed at promoting reconciliation among Iraqis and discussing issues such as legislation on hydrocarbons, revision of the Constitution, and creation of a federation.

Jordan Seeks More Aid to Address Iraqi Refugee Issues:

- At a conference held in Amman, the Government of Jordan appealed to the international community to assist Iraq's neighboring countries (mainly Jordan and Syria) with sheltering hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees that have fled their homeland. Jordanian Foreign Minister Salah Bashir urged conference attendees to help neighbors find "mechanisms to help these states cope with the burdens of hosting Iraqi brothers and provide them with a decent living until they return to a unified Iraq." Bashir also said that "the main challenge now is to find the right environment for a political settlement in Iraq that would restore security and stability, helping Iraqi refugees return home, because there is no other alternative."

British Defense Secretary Visits Iraq/PM Brown Promises Inquiry:

- During a visit to Iraq March 13, Des Browne, British Defense Secretary, said the UK commitment to Iraq remained "absolute," adding however that the nature of that commitment was changing with increasing focus on economic development. Separately, on March 17, Gordon Brown, British Prime Minister, promised an inquiry into the Iraq war, but only after all British forces have withdrawn. The nature and scope of the inquiry has yet to be decided.



DIPLOMATIC – Economic Engagement

Members of EU Parliament Have Questions about Aid to Iraq:

- European legislators demanded answers to questions about millions of euros for Iraqi reconstruction from the EU's external affairs commissioner, Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Members threatened to delay signing off on the 2006 accounts unless €200 million are accounted for. Ferrero-Waldner emphasized that there was no evidence any funding had been misused. She also said that it was impossible to break down where the money went specifically because it was entrusted to a central fund administered by the UN and the World Bank. However, members are concerned this violates the bloc's financial rules requiring the identification of all recipients. The parliamentary committee is to decide next month whether or not to postpone its vote pending the availability of additional information.



DIPLOMATIC – Coalition Contributors

26 Countries with forces in Iraq (including U.S.)

Albania	Denmark	Korea	Romania
Armenia	El Salvador	Latvia	Singapore
Australia	Estonia	Lithuania	Tonga
Azerbaijan	Georgia	Macedonia	Ukraine
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Japan	Moldova	United Kingdom
Bulgaria	Kazakhstan	Mongolia	
Czech Republic		Poland	

TOTAL ~ 9,970 Forces

32 Countries and NATO*
(including the U.S.)
Support Iraqi Stability Operations

*32 includes the U.S., the 25 countries listed above, and six non-MNF-I countries: Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Turkey

Note: Fiji and New Zealand, participating as a part of the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), are not included.

CONTACT INFORMATION



- This brief draws from multiple sources. References are cited on the following pages.
- Please forward all questions and/or comments to:
NEA-I-IPOG-DL@state.gov



NOTES AND SOURCE CITATIONS (1 of 2)

Slide 4:

- Department of State, NEA Political Section, NEA-I-IPOL-DL@state.gov
- AP, March 17 http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080317/ap_on_go_pr_wh/chenev

Slide 5:

- UNHCR Report on 2007 Asylum Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries, March 18, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/47df9f864.html>
- AFP, March 17 http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20080318/wl_mideast_afp/unrefugeesiraq_080318003502
- AFP, March 18th http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20080318/wl_mideast_afp/iraqunrestunity

Slide 6:

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Slide 7:

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